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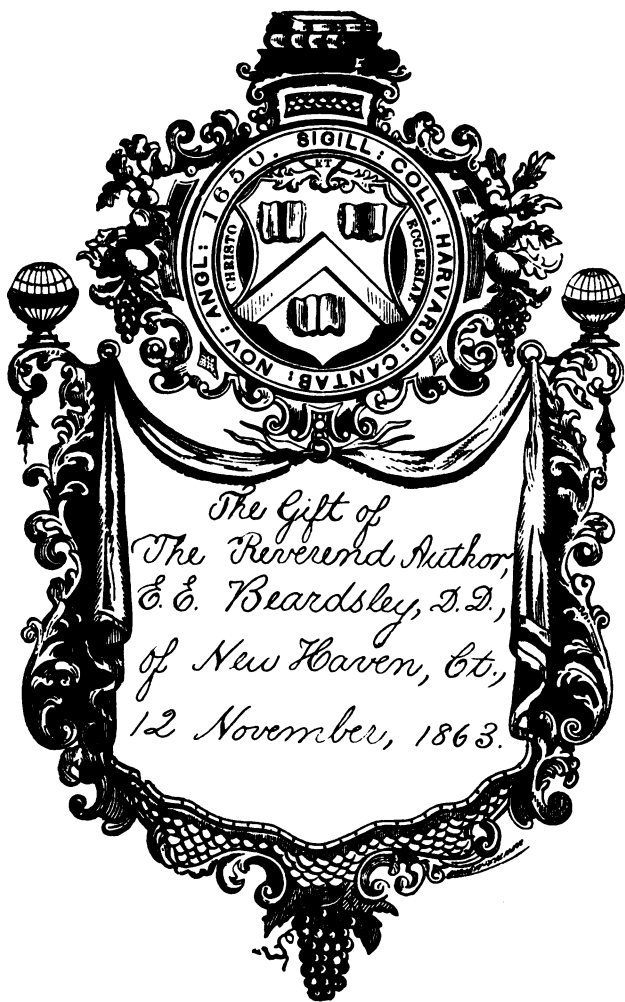
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THE GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE.

AN

ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN

ST. THOMAS' CHURCH, NEW HAVEN,

Easter Sunday, 1858.

BY REV. E. E. BEARDSLEY, D. D.,

RECTOR.



NEW HAVEN:

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the Author.

At the Annual meeting of St. Thomas' Parish, held on Easter Monday, April 5th, 1858, it was

Voted, That a Committee of three be appointed to wait upon the Rector, and request for publication a copy of his Anniversary Discourse, delivered Easter morning, and that Messrs. J. W. HENRY, L. A. DICKINSON, and J. L. TREAT be said Committee.

Attest,

HARRY PRESCOTT, *Clerk*.

DISCOURSE.

PHILIPPIANS, I. 3.

I THANK MY GOD, UPON EVERY REMEMBRANCE OF YOU.

THE heart of St. Paul was especially cheered in the gloom of his prison by the Christian state and kindness of the Philippians. As he looked forth upon the towns and cities and territories which he had marked with the teachings and toils of his Apostleship, no spot seemed so bright and refreshing to his faith as Philippi. The Church in that city alone of all the Churches which he had planted, was ever ready to communicate with him in affliction, and to minister to the relief of his personal necessities. Once and again their timely and generous contributions to him at Thessalonica, had warmed his love and stirred his gratitude. And now while shut up within the prison walls of Rome and suffering peculiar privations, these dear Philippians sent unto him by the hands of his companion in labor and faithful fellow soldier, new tokens of their sympathy and remembrance. Epaphroditus appears to have incurred, in his journey, a dangerous illness, for we read that he "was sick nigh unto death." When at length he recovered and was filled with a longing desire to see his friends again, he set out on his return to his post in the Philippian Church, where anxiety had been awakened by the report of his sickness, and the Apostle improved the opportunity of his return, to write a letter of grateful acknowledgment to his beloved converts. He had nothing else by which to testify his sin-

cere affection and his warm appreciation of their kindness and generosity. And, indeed, what testimony could have been fuller and more decided? For such a letter! How different from those that he addressed to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians or the Thessalonians! These make frequent mention of divisions and contentions—of the perils of false doctrine—of heresies and apostasies—of departures from the faith, through the influence of corrupt and perverse teachers, and hence they are much occupied with reproofs and rebukes, administered in the spirit of a mind, enlightened supernaturally with the light of the everlasting Gospel. But in this Epistle to the Philippians, there is not a word of censure uttered. It glows with the commendation of the Apostle and burns with the intensity of his love. After the usual greeting, which we find in all his letters, he opens with the words of the text, “I THANK MY GOD, UPON EVERY REMEMBRANCE OF YOU;” and then he goes on in a strain of pathetic earnestness, to pour out his inmost feelings—his joy for their “fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now,”—his prayer that “their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;” assuring them at the same time, that his sufferings and confinement—so far from impeding the progress of the Gospel—had “rather fallen out to its furtherance.” St. Paul discovers also in the Epistle to the Philippians more perhaps than in any other portion of his writings—his own Christian life, his faith, his ability under the teachings of divine grace to accomodate his mind to his circumstances, and his entire earnestness to win for himself, if so he might, Christ whose Cross and poverty and reproach he had voluntarily chosen.

It is well, my brethren, if the Christian minister in these days can follow the example of St. Paul—and not only commend his people as the Philippians were commended—but

"thank his God upon every remembrance of them." In reviewing this morning the history of our Pastoral connection with all its work and care and responsibility, I feel that I have some right to appropriate the spirit of the text and to be grateful to God for your zeal and "fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now."

Ten years ago on this Easter festival a little company, with more zeal than means, and more faith than influence, gathered in the Lecture Room near the foot of Orange street, and then and there the services of St. Thomas' Church were begun. The Parish had been duly formed February 24th, two months previous to these opening services, and the intermediate time had been used by the members in obtaining a Rector, and arranging and providing for his support. Such was the pecuniary weakness of the original organization, and so uninviting outwardly was the whole prospect, that the question with the people could not have been, as with wealthy and long established parishes, 'who shall be called to the rectorship?' but, who will come and throw himself into this position of anxiety and care and self-sacrifice, and work with us in faith, building up and looking for the reward of his labors more to the future than the present? I remember the hour when with fear and trembling I decided on the acceptance of your invitation, and afterwards removed hither to undertake responsibilities that I might have prudently declined. Having "faith as a grain of mustard seed," that the tree would grow and spread forth its salubrious branches, "I have continued unto this day," never for a moment listening to the suggestion, that the field of usefulness could be changed, and a situation taken where the emoluments of the Pastoral office might be much greater, while its cares and anxieties would certainly be less. The number present at the first communion, which was the Easter communion, celebrated when the services were opened, was 25, and

about 30 families originally composed the parish and congregation. Of these families, some, like the blade of grain which had not much deepness of earth, soon withered away, and of the rest, but eight are still connected with us, thus showing the rapid changes which a decade of years produces in a little congregation. The Pastor sees and notes these changes, though others are constantly coming in to supply the vacancies occasioned by death and removal. His register, like that at the inn, is scarcely more than a record of arrivals and departures. At best his flock resembles the river that rolls along over its bed, always full, but never for one hour the same. Before even the year in which the Parish was formed had closed, it was plain to be seen that the enterprise, by the blessing of God, must succeed, and therefore your thoughts were properly turned to the necessity of securing a more spacious and convenient room. No such room could then be obtained, but impelled by an enlarged faith, you purchased, after mature deliberation, in the beginning of January, 1849, this lot in Elm street, and took the preliminary steps to erect upon it, without delay, a temporary Chapel. The minute history of that Chapel is too fresh in your recollections to need repetition here. It was to us what the tabernacle was to the ancient Hebrews, a secure and quiet resting place, till the growth of the congregation and the growth of the city warranted the building of a better, more beautiful, and more enduring temple. When I look back, brethren, to that period of six years, in which the energies of the parish were tasked to the uttermost, when I recall the long and earnest consultations touching the advancement and prosperity of the work that had been undertaken, the full and free interchange of opinions, which, if they sometimes conflicted, were so harmonized at the last, as to end in positive advantage; when I think of your progress in spiritual things; of your zeal and fidelity as a people united in

the love of Christ and his Church ; of your perseverance in the midst of new and unexpected discouragements ; of your readiness in all the critical points of your history to look forward and not backward,—when I think of these things, why should I not “thank my God upon every remembrance of you ?”

The records of the Parish and of the Vestry for the year 1853, detail the successive steps that were taken to enter upon the erection of the “second temple,”—this larger and more fitting sanctuary, that is to stand, we trust, and echo the voices of generations of worshipers. Overtures to change the site, to go with your organization into a part of the city where, five years before you were ready to look, met with no favor, though they were respectfully considered, and declined only because the interest and associations of the people all centred here. The last religious services were held in the Chapel, Sunday, March 12, 1854, and soon the walls were leveled to the ground, and the trenches dug for the foundations of the new structure. A month later, and a great company of us stood under the fervid rays of an April sun, to invoke God’s blessing upon the work of His servants, and to lay the corner-stone,*—not forgetting, in all this, that “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” A large upper room received us while the building was in the process of erection ; and when the year came round, the joy of this Easter season was for us enlivened, that we could gather here, and “with all humility

* The corner-stone was laid April 24th, 1854. The day was very pleasant and a large concourse of people witnessed the ceremonies and heard the Address of Bishop Williams.

The edifice was consecrated April 19th, 1855, by Bishop Brownell.

and readiness of heart," consecrate our work to the honor of Almighty God, asking him

"To look propitious from His throne,
And take this temple for His own."

Such are the evidences of outward prosperity that we are permitted to review on this Anniversary of our Pastoral connection. It does not become me, brethren, to say much of the inner life, of the growth in spiritual things, of our being blessed and built up in that which is far better than all, THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS. In what relates to my own duties, it will be enough to mention that they have been without interruption, thank God, from the failure of health and the necessity or the desire consequent thereupon to seek refreshment and restoration by the usual clerical indulgence. Only one Communion Sunday, when a severe domestic affliction detained me from the Sanctuary, have you failed to see me in my place, consecrating those elements which Christ has made the pledges of His dying love. During the period of my ministry among you, I have admitted to the Church by Baptism, 169—34 adults and 135 children. I have presented to the Bishop for the renewal of their Baptismal engagements in the Apostolic rite of Confirmation, 121. Nearly 300 have been admitted and received to the Holy Communion: 62 couples have been united in Matrimony; and I have buried 155—to say nothing of the funerals that I have joined my brethren in attending. These statistics do not show any large and sudden accessions, but they indicate work and progress. And here it ought to be noted, that changes outside of us have taken place in the city, of perceptible advantage to the Church at large, though not calculated, perhaps, to add immediately to our own particular organization. Let me

turn back to an earlier page of history. The corner-stone of St. Paul's was laid as a Chapel of ease to Trinity Church, April 18th, 1829; and I find in looking over the Diocesan Journals, a parochial Report in the next year, covering the state of the two congregations, and saying that "the Pews, both in the Church and Chapel, with very few exceptions, are rented and occupied—the Parish having received, within a late period, considerable accessions from the increase of the city, and other causes." But notwithstanding such was the Report in 1830, nearly twenty years passed away before any attempt was made here to enlarge the borders of the Church. The population of the city, in the mean time, had almost doubled. Other communions had erected their houses of worship, and gathered their new congregations. But the Church had only strengthened her stakes, and drawn in, as she might, the wanderers. The one family was at length divided. Long after the swellings of Jordan were passed, Israel became "two bands," and then followed a Third Episcopal Society, projected and begun as we have described in the former part of our Discourse. The Parish (St. Paul's) whose Rector and some of whose leading members doubted at the time the expediency of forming this Third Society, and frankly expressed their doubts, has since under the influence and guidance of other counsels, planted two Mission Churches* in the outskirts of the city, and directed attention to them as enterprises eminently successful. Still another Mission, commenced under the auspices and patronage of Trinity Church, has grown into a Parish;† and yet, brethren, in the midst of all these efforts, we have steadily and gradually gained in

* St. John's Church and the Chapel in Davenport Avenue—one opened October 1st, 1852, and the other December 10th, 1857.

† Christ Church—consecrated January 6th, 1854.

influence and numbers, and zeal, and strength ; and " I thank my God upon every remembrance of you."

It appears to me, sometimes, that Episcopalians make too much noise about their increase as a Christian denomination, and publish the statistics of their growth and the additions to the ministry of the Church in a way that borders on vain glorying. The Saviour, when he restored sight to the blind man at Bethsaida, " sent him into his own house and charged him neither to go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town ;" and it would better accord with my feelings, if we might so far imitate His example as to leave our works of self-denial and piety to proclaim our praise. But, after all, it cannot be gainsayed that the Church grows throughout our country. There are elements in her very constitution which will command the blessing of heaven ; except personal unrighteousness and impiety intervene and cause it to be withholden. Truth, unity, and order, are qualities inherent in our Communion, and the faithful exemplification of these in times past, has enlarged the limits of the sacred fold, and drawn within many who were sternly standing without. How full of encouragement is the early history of the Church even in this city ! No extraordinary event, as far as we are informed, attracting many families at once to its worship, no sudden struggle for the maintenance of lofty principles, marked its origin or its progress. Begun in faith, it has but grown as bodies grow which have a healthy vigor in their heart and in their members. There was a memorable struggle, it is true, in yonder College walls ; for there it was that Cutler, and Johnson, and their fearless coadjutors, first learned, in the early part of the last century, to look upon Episcopacy as a thing of Apostolic origin ; but no parochial organization of the Church seems to have been secured in this place until about 1750. Parishes were formed, and

Missionaries sustained in the neighboring towns years before; but solitary Churchmen only professed the faith here.* Go back, then, brethren, a century, and imagine yourselves to be standing in the midst of the city, then of narrow limits. You see Punderson, the first resident Missionary of the Church of England, in New Haven, walking up and down to watch and water his little flock,—a flock which, in its proportions and in its circumstances might have well led him to ask, with the prophet of old, “Jacob is small, by whom shall he arise?”

Behold us now. It is certainly in no spirit of vain-glory that we should survey our present position, or contrast it with the state of the Church a century ago. But one cannot help thinking of the joy which Punderson, and Palmer, and Hub-

* The Rev. Ebenezer Punderson, who was first a Missionary in the eastern part of the State, and then an itinerant Missionary, probably removed his family to New Haven as early as the summer of 1751. This was his native place, and he might have sought from the Venerable Society a transfer to it, not only because there was a demand here for the services of the Church of England, but that he might educate his sons in Yale College. Two of them graduated in the same year, (1755.) The Churchmen had become sufficiently numerous in 1752 to build a Church, which was erected on the east side of Town street, now Church street.

Though the first great outbreak for Episcopacy was made within the walls of Yale College, and was so astounding as to shake them almost to their very foundations; yet the event seems to have made no abiding impression upon the citizens, favorable to the claims of the Church. The plant took root and grew elsewhere, rather than under the shade of the College. Even Dr. Johnson, who has left a record while in Stratford of his frequent ministrations in the interior and shore towns of Fairfield and New Haven Counties, and along the Sound from Guilford to New London, and farther still, was little wanted in the spot where he first broke away from his early Academic and Christian associations. For with the exception of coming here to baptize a child and to bury another from the same household, there is no record of any official act of his, performed in New Haven for a continuous period of twenty years.

bard, faithful Missionaries of the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign parts, must have experienced, could they have cast their vision forward and seen in the dimmest outlines, the Church as she is this day in the city of their ministrations. Strange mutations occur in the lapse of time. Our edifice is built in the neighborhood of the princely residences of Eaton and Davenport—the first and most influential settlers of the Colony. It is within a stone's throw of the cellar where the regicides were concealed when their eager pursuers were passing by. It occupies the very ground whence at a later day rose a dwelling to shelter the Pastor* of a Congregational or Separate society. That society, after a chequered history of light and shade, finally disbanded and disposed of their property. The bell which rung them together at the hour of prayer, hangs in the tower of the Episcopal Church at Cheshire,† and St. Thomas covers the site of the old parsonage.

These are curious and interesting facts, brethren. I introduce them at this time, because they show that you have a history to preserve as well as to make. You have built a Church for perpetuity. You do not mean that it shall pass into other hands, or cease to preach both in its desk and in its

* The Rev. Samuel Bird. He was Pastor of the "White Haven Society," whose Meeting-house stood on the South-east corner of Elm and Church streets, and from its color was called the "Blue Meeting-house. The "White Haven Society" at length joined the "Fair Haven Society," and a new corporate existence was commenced which is perpetuated in what is now commonly called the "North Church."

The Society voted the Parsonage to Mr. Bird, when he was settled, on condition that he should pay for what had been expended upon it, after the departure of the previous Minister. (Vide Dutton's Centennial Discourses, 1842.) The property descended to R. E. Northrop, a grandson of Mr. Bird, from whom it was purchased by St. Thomas' Parish.

† St Peter's Church, Cheshire, was the Author's first Parochial charge.

pulpit,—Christ in the mystery of His holy Incarnation and Nativity,—Christ in His Cross and Passion,—Christ in His precious Death and Burial,—and Christ in His glorious Resurrection and Ascension. But while “the building fitly framed together” is to last, and the Ritual and Doctrine of the Church to continue the same, the worshipers therein and the Priest who shall conduct their devotions will change. Whether I shall remain in my place here at the end of another decade of years, is quite uncertain. It is not among the number of probabilities that you will—that there will be no removals to other scenes and other associations—no transplantings to that silent city of the dead, where men sleep until the morning of the great Resurrection. For myself, my most fervent prayer is that the remainder of my life may be wholly given to the work and vocation of the ministry—that by no love of ease or spirit of self-indulgence, I may weaken its force and effectiveness, and that I may so abide in Christ as to make all my duties and instructions a contribution to the honor and glory of His name. I do but speak the desire that presses more and more upon my soul as time shortens, when I appropriate St. Paul’s words to the Romans and say—“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”

Next to the salvation of your souls, the object that fills me with perpetual anxiety, is the diminution or removal of your pecuniary indebtedness. The miserable system * upon which the Episcopal Churches in this city are built, entails a burden upon the children, and works in other ways disadvantageously to the life and glory of our Protestant faith. The Romanists

* Trinity, St. Paul’s, and St. Thomas’ Churches, were built with Stock subscriptions. Each Parish may redeem its Stock at pleasure, but it is only liable for Annual Interest at six per cent. To meet this Interest, the income from the Pews is pledged.

can build their costly houses of worship, and pay for them when they are dedicated to God in the pompous ceremonies of their Ritual. I am persuaded, brethren, that none of you are any poorer in this world's goods, for your liberality to Christ and His Church in the past. There may be individuals among you, who, like the widow with her two mites, have done what they could, and, possibly, there are others who have done as *little* as they *could*. However this may be, each one, as to the measure of his works and the return for his temporal prosperity, must stand or fall to his own Master. I am grateful for all that covers our connection up to this day; but when my stewardship shall close—be it sooner or be it later—when the time shall come that our relations as Pastor and people must be sundered, it will cheer my faith and mitigate the pain of separation, if I can look back as I do now, and “THANK MY GOD UPON EVERY REMEMBRANCE OF YOU.”

A P P E N D I X.

THE REV. DR. PITKIN, of Albany, N. Y., has kindly furnished me with the following statement of facts. It throws some new light upon the early history of the Church in New Haven, and may be relied upon, as it was drawn chiefly from the archives of the Venerable Propagation Society in London.

The first movement of which I have any knowledge, for establishing the Church in New Haven, was on the part of Rev. Mr. ARNOLD, of West Haven, who endeavored to obtain possession of the land now held by Trinity Church of New Haven.

He was opposed by the inhabitants in a riotous manner, and his life threatened, so that he and his servants were obliged to desist. He made presentments against certain persons, and appealed to the civil authorities for relief, but to no purpose. This was as early as 1739. A statement of this case was made March 29, 1739, and sent to the Secretary of the Propagation Society. It is signed by Samuel Seabury,* Samuel Johnson, Ebenezer Funderston, Jonathan Arnold, J. Wetmore, Henry Caner, and John Beach.

The Rev. Mr. Lyon, of Derby, writes to the Secretary of the ^{Propagation} Presbyterian Society, May 8, 1744, as follows: "At Milford and New Haven, there are a few members of our Church; but care is taken, at the last of these places especially, that they should not increase. The Rector and Tutors of the College there, having of late suffered none of the students (except the children of professed Churchmen) to attend *my lectures*." From this letter it would appear that this gentleman was in the habit of holding services occasionally in New Haven. It may be, however, that these services were held in West Haven.

Under date of Oct. 1, 1746, Dr. Johnson writes to the Secretary thus: "There seems to be a very growing disposition towards the Church in the town of New Haven, as well as in the College, so that I hope ere long there will be a flourishing

* The father of BISHOP SEABURY.

Church there." In 1749, March 28, he writes as follows: "The Church is very considerably increasing at New Haven, where the College is, and a considerable sum is already subscribed towards building a Church; and it is not doubted but between the town and West Haven, a village within four miles, where there is already a neat little Church, there will soon be forty or fifty families."

In 1750, the Rev. Mr. Punderson was appointed by the Propagation Society an itinerant Missionary in New England, [Connecticut.] He records preaching in the State House in New Haven on the Sunday after Commencement (1750) "to a numerous assembly, notwithstanding Brother Thomson preached the same day in the Church at West Haven." From this allusion to West Haven, it would seem that the Churchmen of New Haven were in the habit of attending service in West Haven.

Dr. Johnson writes in the same year to the Secretary, that Norwalk, Hebron, Middletown, Wallingford, Guilford and Branford, are ready to engage £30 per annum for the support of a Missionary. He makes no mention of New Haven, from which we conclude that they preferred remaining for the present connected with West Haven. But in 1752 (April 8) he writes:

"The condition of the Church within this Colony hath not much altered, save that it hath so far increased at New Haven, (with West Haven, at about four miles distant,) that they have this winter got timber to build a Church of the dimensions of 60 feet by 40, besides the steeple and chancel, and as this is a place of very great importance, on account of the College being there, it would be very happy for them if the Society were able to assist them, in providing for a minister, as I doubt they will not be able to do more than £25 sterling per annum themselves, especially while building."

The following extract from the publications of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, &c., will show that the Rev. Mr. Punderson resided in New Haven certainly in 1753, and probably in 1752. The last record of his services in Norwich was in June, 1751.

1753. "The Rev. Mr. Punderson, the Society's itinerant Missionary in Connecticut, having petitioned the Society to be settled Missionary, with only part of his present salary, (which is seventy pounds per annum,) to the members of the Church of England in New Haven, the place of his nativity, (where a new Church is built, to which Mr. Punderson gave the greatest part of the timber,) and to those of the neighboring towns of Gullford and Branford—the Society have granted his request."

